

water up to about three fourths the length of the boat.

As we approached the boat a fish jumped out from inside the boat and landed in the lake. I examined the boat for other fish but there were none inside. The stagnant water inside the boat was full of small larvae, probably of mosquitoes.

We retreated about 20 m from the boat to find out what kind of fish it was and how it had entered the boat. Within seven minutes a fish broke water and landed inside the boat. When I tried to approach the boat close enough to watch the fish, it again jumped from the boat and escaped into the lake. This was repeated five times. I could make out that it was a

murrel, but could not identify the species.

After some time we saw a boat with fishermen. We hailed them and requested them to catch this fish. When the murrel returned to the boat, one of the fishermen threw a net over the boat and caught the fish by hand. It was identified as *Channa striatus*.

After that we dragged the boat out of the water and found that, except for two small holes of about 3x2 cm, the entire bottom was intact. How the murrel came to know that there was water inside that boat with plenty of food in the shape of larvae is a mystery to me.

February 15, 1992

RAZA TEHSIN

33. RECENT OBSERVATIONS ON THE LONGEVITY OF *MEGALOPS CYPRINOIDES* (BROUSS.)

In my previous note in the Society's *Journal* (Kulkarni 1983), I had mentioned different reports about longevity of certain fishes. These contained some anecdotes and indirect deductions also. Even Lagler *et al.* (1977) merely mention "authenticated records of ages of captive fishes suggest that ages of most venerated old carp do not exceed 50 years." The present note extends the limit to 52 years.

In the earlier note I had given a dependable record of the longevity of the Indian tarpon *Megalops cyprinoides* (Brouss.) being not less than 44 years in the fresh water of Walwan lake at Lonavla, dist. Pune (Maharashtra). After the study of breeding biology of the mahseer fish commenced in the above lake (Kulkarni 1971), every year in the months of July and August, when a particular section of the lake (which the fish appeared to prefer) was netted for the collection of ripe mahseer specimens for their artificial fecundation, a few individuals of *Megalops* were entangled accidentally in the nets, indicating that they had continued to survive there. Not much notice was taken of this occurrence. However, since 1983, I had kept a close watch on the survival of this species in the lake. In the note I had recounted how this marine or partly estuarine fish happened to be found in the fresh waters of the lake. Fingerlings of *Megalops* were introduced into the lake as a cyclopscidal fish for control of guinea worm pest (Setna and Kulkarni 1940) and also as a good sport fish, by Fisheries Section of the then Bombay Presidency in July 1939 (vide Annual Report of the Dept. of Industries, 1939-40).

During one of the aforesaid type of fishing operations on 11 August 1991 a specimen of the

above species was caught and measured for its length and weight. This marine fish spends only a short period (four to five months) in estuarine waters and then returns to the sea; it is not known to breed in fresh waters; neither smaller specimens nor fingerlings were ever captured during the past 20 years. It was thus clear that the specimen caught on that day belonged to the batch of fingerlings released in 1939. Moreover, there was no fresh stocking of *Megalops* after that year which I know quite definitely, being in charge of the Dept. of Fisheries till October 1969. These facts indicate that the fish could be at least 52 years of age (two years more than what Lagler *et al.* 1977 reported).

Surprisingly enough the fish had grown very little during the past twenty years. In 1970, some individuals were recorded to be 65 cm in length and 2.8 kg. in weight (Kulkarni 1983) while those caught in 1983 were 67 cm in length and weighed between 2.75 and 3.1 kg. This stagnation in growth was further confirmed by the specimen caught in August 1991, being only 67 cm in length and 3 kg in weight. This shows that after a certain growth in fresh water the fish just survives without gaining weight or length. The stagnation could not be due to lack of food because the lake had an abundance of aquatic life on which the *Megalops* normally feed, but could be due to having reached its normal maximum size. The F.A.O. identification sheet mentions only 55 cm as maximum length. Incidentally, the above observations provide a slightly improved record of growth of the fish.

July 2, 1992

C.V. KULKARNI

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34. ON DISTRIBUTION OF SPOT SWORDTAIL BUTTERFLY *PATHYSA NOMIUS NOMIUS* ESPER

In the month of July 1987 we observed the spot swordtail butterfly *Pathysa nomiulus nomiulus* Esper in Jaipur city. We were on a survey of the rhopaloceran fauna of Jaipur city and in the process found this species in the nursery of the University of Rajasthan. Though the global distribution range of this butterfly covers the entire Oriental region, its occurrence still surprised us as none of the earlier workers have reported its occurrence in this particular region. According to Talbot (THE FAUNA OF BRITISH INDIA: BUTTERFLIES, 1939) and Evans (THE IDENTIFICATION OF INDIAN BUTTERFLIES, 1927) the distribution range of the spot swordtail is - Sikkim, Sri Lanka and south India. Both Talbot and Evans give a 'not rare' status to this butterfly. A wider distribution range (peninsular India to Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Saurashtra, Lucknow, Simla to Sikkim, Assam, Burma and Ceylon) is reported by Wynter-Blyth (BUTTERFLIES OF THE INDIAN REGION, 1957) but that too does not include Jaipur or any other district of Rajasthan.

Wynter-Blyth's work also gives a 'not rare' status for this butterfly.

This butterfly was observed in many other localities in the same year (1987) but the maximum

density was recorded in the above mentioned nursery. The other localities where swordtails were observed include certain busy roads, the garden of one of us (D.D.), and a few public gardens.

The spot swordtail butterfly is known to migrate long distances and to fly at altitudes as high as 2000 + m. It is quite possible that these butterflies observed in Jaipur were on their migratory route and were resting. There are certain facts which support this migration (irregular?) hypothesis. These are:

(a) All the swordtails disappeared after 15 August 1987.

(b) The reported food plants of this butterfly are *Saccopetalum tomentosum* and *Polyalthia longifolia*. Of these two, the latter occurs in Jaipur. No larvae of the swordtails could be found on *Polyalthia* plants.

(c) We again failed to find the spot swordtail during the next rainy season (July-August 1988) in all the localities where they were observed in the previous year.

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September 7, 1991

35. RECORD OF *PLEBEJUS EVERSMANNI* (STGR.) (LYCAENIDAE: LEPIDOPTERA) FROM INDIA

Malari lies in the dry, trans-Himalayan zone of Chamoli district in northern Uttar Pradesh (30° 41' N, 79° 54' E), at an elevation of c. 3000 m.

On 21 August 1987, a collection of butterflies was made along the motor road a kilometre north-east of Malari. A single male specimen of an unusual Lycaenid was recorded at a mud puddle gathering of Lycaenids, mainly *Polyommatus Latreille*. This was forwarded to the Rev. Alan Bean at the Oxford

University Museum for identification. Unfortunately, the genitalia was damaged in preparation, so it is not diagnostic.

His observations on the specimen are as follows: "Forewing expanse: 12 mm. The aedeagus shows alulae. The labides are long, straight and terminally hooked. The falces are about the same length. The valvae were damaged."

"There is no spine on the upper side of the